ADDRESSAL CONTRACTOR # U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY Approved For Release 1999/09/09 CIA-RDP82-00457R009200 CD NO COUNTRY Italy DATE DISTR. 30 NOV SUBJECT Possible Merger of NO OF PAGES 2 Hight-Wing Youth Groups RETURN TO CIA 25X1A NO. OF ENCLS (LISTED BELOW) SUPPLEMENT TO 25X1X REPORT NO. A meeting was held in Rome in the first week of September 1951 between Luig1 Gedda, Vice-President of Catholic Action, who promoted the meeting. and one representative of each of the Youth Groups of the following political parties1; Movimento Sociale Italiana (MSI: Italian Social Movement); Partito Monarchico Italiano (PME; Stalian Monarchist Party); Unione Monarchica Italiana (UMI; Italian Monarchist Union); and Partito Liberale Italiano (PLI; Italian Liberal Party). The purpose: of this meeting were: To seek a common political basis on which common action by the Youth Groups represented could be founded, with particular regard to the following issues: The formation of a united anti-Communist front; Foreign policy generally, and the Peace Treaty and Trieste problems specifically; The "democratic organization of the Italian State"; and The institutional questions To discuss the measure of political and, more particularly, financial aid which could be afforded to participants in such a political union of youth by Catholic Action. A further meeting was arranged for the end of September 1951. The identities of the representatives who attended the first meeting could not be ascertained. They were not, presumably, the Secretaries of the respective Youth Groups, who are all well known and would probably have been mentioned by name. At the second meeting, UMI will be represented by Savarese3, the journalist, This meeting was organized and attended without any official reference whatsoever to the Parties to which the various Youth Groups belong, and the accent throughout was placed on the formulation of a "common policy for Italian Youth."

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2. In the course of discussion, Gedda stated that, if an agreement were reached, Catholic Action could place very large sums at the disposal of its allies.

25X1A 3. Probably Nino Saverese, the novelist, essayist and Right Wing journalist, age 65, is intended.

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Two interesting articles have recently appeared in the press; one is by Gedda and can be readily interpreted as anti-Christian Democratic in tone, the other is an unsigned "elucidation" in the Osservatore Romano (the Vatican organ) which confirms the Vatican's confidence in the Christian Democratic Party. It is not difficult, by reading between the lines, to divine what Vatican policy towards the Christian Democratic Party really is.

On the one hand, the Vatican is preoccupied by the recent considerable increase in strength of the right-ling parties, particularly as regards the youth of the country, although in southern Italy young and old alike have tended strongly to be drawn in that direction. The Christian Democratic Party's loss in popularity is especially worrying, and it is feared that the Party is likely to become increasingly unpopular in view of the continually worsening internal economic situation and of the Party's lack of success in the international field with regard to the problems of Trieste and the Peace Treaty. What makes this situation all the more serious is that it has developed in spite of the Vatican's unremitting efforts to exercise control over the country's youth and guide it into the paths of Truth.

On the other hand, the Vatican is faced with an uncomfortable dilemma. Clearly it cannot go on counting entirely on the Christian Democratic Farty as hitherto. For one thing, the factors mentioned above are adversely affecting the Party's prestige, and for snother the morality and integrity of individual Christian Democratic politicians in office have been persistently and most plausibly impugned. Equally clearly, however, the Vatican cannot at this stage do a complete turnabout and support political groups which are notoriously "reactionary" for fear of provoking a minor landslide to the ranks of the left-wing parties.

The Vatican's best bet is obviously to keep a foot in each camp. It would appear that it has decided to use Catholic Action in order to perform this exercise. Vittorio Veronese, President of Catholic Action, unequivocally supports the Christian Democratic Party. Gedda, on the other hand, is now maneuvering in search of rapprochement with the right wing. There is, of course, a notorious and well-published political dispute between Veronese and Gedda, but the ease with which either could, if and when necessary, be thrown overboard by the Vatican, leads one to wonder whether this difference of opinion is as deep-rooted as it seems.